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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed data from year 1 of Project Choice, Connecticut's response to Sheff v. O'Neill, a 1989 school desegregation lawsuit. Project Choice is an interdistrict transfer program modeled on a program that began in Hartford in 1966. It allows suburban children to attend urban schools. For each child participating, the district where the child enrolls receives a $2,000 grant. Bonus funding goes to schools and districts with large numbers of such students. Researchers analyzed quantitative and qualitative data on Project Choice and on the expansion of interdistrict magnets. The study included enrollment data and interviews with people involved in implementing Project Choice and the interdistrict magnet program. Results describe: effects of school choice on urban and suburban enrollments; non-enrollment effects of open choice; effects of interdistrict magnet schools; overall interdistrict enrollment in Connecticut; and project limitations, which include logistics, funding, local commitment, and the broader legal climate. The paper examines Connecticut's programs as a test of interdistrict school choice, highlighting participants in school choice, racial patterns in urban-to-suburban transfers, and worries over skimming the most academically talented students from urban schools. It concludes by discussing the ends and means of educational policy. (Contains 34 references.) (SM)

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# Steady Habits: Connecticut's Response to *Sheff v. O'Neill*

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Prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000. Comments are welcome; please direct them to mcdermott@educ.umass.edu.

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In 1989, a second-grader named Milo Sheff became the lead plaintiff in a school desegregation lawsuit filed in the Hartford, Connecticut Superior Court. The plaintiffs in *Sheff v. O'Neill* argued that the concentration of minority students in the city of Hartford and of white students in the suburbs violated state constitutional guarantees of an adequate public education and of freedom from segregation. In 1996, the state Supreme Court ruled that Connecticut state officials had a constitutional duty to integrate the public schools across town and school district lines, it had not proposed a remedy for segregation, instead leaving the question to the discretion of the General Assembly. In Connecticut, known as "the land of steady habits" because of the state's culture of Yankee skepticism about innovation, the courts have typically deferred to the legislature in this way.

P.A. 97-290, enacted in 1997, was the centerpiece of the legislative response. It amended the statute identfying the "educational interests of the state" to include the reduction of "racial, ethnic, and economic isolation" and to require each school district to "provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds." It also increased financial support for interdistrict magnets, added the reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation to the list of factors to be considered in the approval of charter schools, called upon the state Education Commissioner to produce a report on the reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, and more than tripled the amount of money being spent on interdistrict school choice (magnet schools, charter schools, and interdistrict transfers).

The interdistrict transfer program was modeled on Project Concern, which had operated in the Hartford area since 1966. Project Choice expanded Hartford-area participation, made it possible for suburban children to attend urban schools, and included students in New Haven and Bridgeport. The program is variously known as Project Choice, the Hartford Area Choice Program, and Open Choice; I will use the terms interchangeably.

A second bill passed in 1997 expanded access to early childhood education in the state's most disadvantaged schools and communities. The state also directly addressed the reform of Hartford's public schools by disbanding the city Board of Education and appointing a new board with broad powers to address corruption and inefficiency in the school system.

Before some provisions of P.A. 97-290 were even implemented, the *Sheff* plaintiffs returned to Superior Court, claiming that the General Assembly had not "adopted or put into effect an adequate plan to remedy racial and ethnic isolation in the Hartford public schools and racial and ethnic isolation in the Hartford region" (*Sheff* Complaint, 1998). In March, 1999, Superior Court Judge Julia Aurigemma ruled in favor of the state and chided the plaintiffs for failing to wait until the state response was fully underway before criticizing it as inadequate. According to Judge Aurigemma, the only way of producing the speedy results sought by the plaintiffs would have been mandatory reassignment of students, which would have backfired and left the schools more segregated than before because of white flight (*Sheff v. O'Neill*, 1999).

In a sense, however, Judge Aurigemma acted as prematurely as she accused the *Sheff* plaintiffs of doing. The Commissioner of Education's report on the implementation of programs to advance student achievement and reduce student isolation was not

released to the public until January, 1999, after the *Sheff* trial was complete. In that report, despite their stated confidence that voluntary programs will eventually produce a higher degree of school integration than mandatory reassignment, state officials shied away from providing a bottom-line summary of the effect P.A. 97-290 has had thus far on integration. The report listed the numbers of students involved in interdistrict choice, interdistrict magnets, and charter schools but did not provide data about the racial identification of those students or the programs' net effect on integration. Although Project Choice has been expanded somewhat, even the most optimistic forecast of the size of Project Choice in 2000-2001 is to have 1800 students participating, out of more than 500,000.

Analysis of the actual effects of P.A. 97-290 on school integration shows that although it may be the case that voluntary programs produce more integration over the long term than mandatory ones, Connecticut's initiative thus far has been too small to serve as a test of that theory. It can, however, be seen as an indication of where programs intended to equalize educational opportunity for children of all races may of necessity be heading. In focusing on voluntary measures and eschewing numerically defined integration targets, Connecticut's interdistrict programs began under the same legal and political constraints that other states and cities now face in the wake of federal court decisions in 1998 (*Wessmann v. Gittens*) and 1999 (*Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*). Connecticut's response to *Sheff v. O'Neill* can thus yield insights that will be applicable elsewhere in the United States where policy makers are implementing school choice and attempting to increase racial diversity and expand access to opportunity in public schools.

## METHODOLOGY

This study analyzes quantitative and qualitative data on the first year of Project Choice and of the expansion of interdistrict magnets made possible by P.A. 97-290. The focus is on these programs, rather than the interdistrict cooperative grants, charter schools, or the change in the state's statutory definition of its educational interests. Thus far, most of the interdistrict grants and the initiatives responding to the addition of diversity to the educational interests of the state have been short-term programs, or have not involved a great deal of change in students' everyday educational experiences. Most of the charter schools were approved prior to PA 97-290 and have missions that do not emphasize integration or "reduction of racial isolation." At this point, then, the most leverage on the school choice controversy and on the question of how desegregation and diversity should be understood in a changing legal and political climate comes from looking at Project Choice and the interdistrict magnets.

In addition to examination of data on enrollment, research included thirteen semi-structured interviews with people involved in implementing Project Choice and the interdistrict magnet schools program. A full list is included at the end of this paper. In three of the interviews, there was more than one interviewee. Interviewees included the directors of Project Choice in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport, state officials in charge of diversity and choice-related programs, one superintendent of schools, the director of New Haven's magnet school program, two interdistrict magnet school principals, and six principals or assistant principals of schools receiving students though

the choice program. Because some of the school administrators requested anonymity, citations to those interviews will refer to numbers in the list, from which some names have been omitted.

For this exploratory study, no attempt was made to secure a representative sample of principals or superintendents. Future work on this subject will employ a more scientific sample and will also include the perspectives of parents and students choosing among schools.

## I. EFFECTS OF PROJECT CHOICE AND INTERDISTRICT MAGNETS

Project Open Choice traces its orgins to Project Concern, a voluntary city-to-suburban transfer program in the Hartford area. Project Concern began in 1966 when 266 students were randomly selected from predominantly African-American Hartford schools (the four with the largest number of Title I eligible students) and transferred, with parental approval, to five several nearby suburban districts. The orginal idea of the program was for it to be temporary and remedial. As the program evolved, the Hartford students were able to stay in the suburban districts until they graduated from high school if they chose to do so. At its peak, Project Choice involved well over one thousand students (Carroll interview).

Over the years, financial support for Project Concern decreased. Suburban districts had fewer spaces available, and the program shrank. After the passage of P.A. 97-290, the state stopped funding Project Choice altogether and the students, plus additional enrollees, became part of the new Choice Program. Although the size of the

Choice Program has grown since 1998, fewer Hartford students are currently enrolled in suburban districts than at the peak of Project Concern.

*A. Effects of Open Choice on Urban and Suburban Enrollments*

For each child participating in Project Choice, the district where the child enrolls receives a grant of $2000. Districts with more than 25 Project Choice children, and schools with more than 10, also receive "bonus" funding. The districts have discretion over how to spend the grants. Local officials interviewed for this study said that the money tended to go to academic support services. One superintendent said that he had hoped to use the funds for technology upgrades, but ended up starting a remedial program open to all students once the gaps in academic preparedness between Choice children and most of the students already in the district became apparent (Interview 3). At their own initiative and expense, parent-teacher organizations at schools attended by Project Choice children carry out a variety of programs intended to help the city children and their families feel at home in the new districts. The most common appear to be parent social events and designation of local "host families" so that city children have a place to go when they become ill during the day or want to avoid making two round trips on days when an evening school event is scheduled (Carroll interview, Interviews 1, 3, 4, 5). For transportation, the state pays $1,200 per child to the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) coordinating the programs in each metropolitan area. The RESCs then make the transportation arrangements, including "late buses" so that children can participate in extracurricular activities.

Apart from some initial skepticism on the part of both urban and suburban families, implementation of Project Choice has gone smoothly and the level of satisfaction with everything except the length of the students' travel times is high. Some city families declined to have suburban "host families" for their children. In the Hartford area, some Project Choice students are themselves children of Project Concern particpants who still live in the city (Carroll interview, Interview 1).

Considering the importance of Project Choice in the state's claims to be reducing racial isolation in its public schools, actual data on the program's impact is harder to come by than one might imagine. The Implementation Report released in January, 1999 listed the numbers of students from each community involved in the program, but did not include information on whether or not they were members of racial minorities or eligible for free and reduced-price meals (a reasonable though imperfect proxy for poverty). State officials refer requests for more specific data to the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC's) responsible for administering the program in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport.

In 1998-99, about 2% of Hartford public school students used the Choice Program to attend school in the suburbs. The program was smaller in New Haven and Bridgeport where fewer than 1% of students participated.

[See Table 1]

Project Choice is designed as a two-way choice program, and New Haven and Hartford each received four students in 1998-99, according to the RESCs implemented the programs. Of the students transferring from suburban schools to New Haven, two were

black and two were white. Of the four transferring from suburban schools to Hartford schools, two were black, one Latino, and one white.

Clearly, the overall effect of Open Choice on Connecticut's three largest cities was extremely small in its first year. Latino students were much less likely than African-American students to take part. Also, if the intent of Open Choice is understood to be providing opportunities for white students to attend school in cities and minority students to attend school in suburbs, some of the students' choices were in the "wrong" direction (white students out of the cities; minority students in). The racial patterns in use of Open Choice will be discussed further in Part IIA below.

Assessing the consequences of Project Choice for suburban school districts in 1998-99 is a bit more complicated than measuring its urban effects. Although the urban effects were small, it is theoretically possible for the effect on a few suburban towns or schools to have been significant because many suburban districts are quite small and quite homogeneously white. New Haven is the only metropolitan area for which data on the race of students attending suburban schools in 1998-99 has been available so far. The RESCs running Project Choice in all three of the large metropolitan areas provided such data for 1999-2000.

In the Bridgeport area, 87.4% of the city students taking part in Project Choice were black or Latino. We can therefore estimate the program's effect on the suburban districts where the students attended school by assuming that the students were assigned to schools through a process independent of race, so that on average just under ninety percent of each suburb's Project Choice students would be black and Latino. No suburban children used Project Choice to enroll in Bridgeport schools.

[Tables 2 and 3 here]

Table 2 shows that because of the choice program's small size, it had extremely small effects on the overall percentage of the receiving towns' enrollments that were black and Latino. Table 3 shows the actual numbers of students of each racial group who attended each participating suburban school district during the 1999-2000 academic year

Tables 4 and 5 show the effect of Project Choice on suburban enrollments in the New Haven region in 1998-99. These are actual figures, not estimates.

[Tables 4 and 5 here]

The largest increase in black and Latino enrollment was 0.6% in Cheshire, which also had the largest absolute number of Project Choice children. One town contiguous to New Haven (West Haven) received no Project Choice students; according to the Choice Program director for the New Haven region, West Haven and several other towns were already diverse and in some sense "urban" and so chose not to make space available for New Haven students. A rural district, Region 13, received no students through Project Choice but sent one student to New Haven.

White students enrolling in suburban districts through Project Choice had no effect on the racial balance of the receiving districts, as they were few in number and attending districts (Bethany, Branford, Cheshire, East Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Region 5, and Wallingford) that were already predominantly white. Students classified as "other," most of whom were probably Asian-American, also had a miniscule marginal effect on their receiving districts (Ansonia, Cheshire, North Branford, Orange, and Wallingford). Table 6 shows the destinations of students leaving New

Haven for the suburbs in 1999-2000. Note that in some towns, more of the Project Choice students are white than are Latino.

[Table 6 here]

Project Choice had the largest potential impact on the suburbs of Hartford, because Hartford had the largest number of Project Choice participants. In most cases, however, the number of students who attended suburban schools through Project Choice was still quite small compared with the number of black and Latino students already in the districts and with the districts' total enrollments.

[Tables 7 and 8 here]

As in Bridgeport, the precise racial breakdown of Hartford students attending school in each suburban town for 1998-99 was not available. However, only two of the Hartford students taking part in Project Choice in 1998-99 were neither black nor Latino, so it is quite safe to assume that all Project Choice students in a given town in 1998-99 were black and Latino. A few towns experienced gains of about 1% in their black and Latino population. These were Canton, Farmington, Granby, Newington, Plainville, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, and Suffield. In 1999-2000, the Hartford Area Choice Program continued to grow by adding more students and more suburban towns. Table 8 shows this growth.

The gains in 1998-99 black and Latino suburban enrollment for the towns noted above, though small, were the largest ones caused by Project Choice in the suburbs surrounding Connecticut's three largest cities in 1998-99. The program's effect on enrollment was thus incremental at most.

*B. Non-Enrollment Effects of Open Choice*

Increasing suburban enrollment of minority students was not the only possible benefit of the Open Choice program. Indeed, if all that happened as a result of Project Choice was an increase in suburban schools' proportions of black and Latino students, it would be difficult to call the program a success in academic or social terms. The point of the program was not only to get urban children into the suburbs (and vice versa), but also to enhance educational opportunities and build cross-racial understanding.

Suburban school officials praised Project Choice for reinforcing the values of understanding and tolerance in their communities. Many suburban residents have little or no contact with city residents under ordinary circumstances, and they fear the crime and disorder they associate with the city. Project Choice allows them to meet people from nearby cities and to understand that the range of experiences in the city is broader than what they see on the evening news. One suburban vice-principal commented, "I bring Hartford kids with me on field trips, and we'll drop them off in Hartford and the kids are like 'oh, we never knew that Hartford did have some nice places'" (Interview 2). Another told a story that showed how she believed participating in Project Concern and Project Choice had changed attitudes in her community:

> One of the things I've seen, and I don't know if this is anything to do with anything, but we had some bus drivers that come from Hartford. Some African-American drivers. And I think that there was a real, there was a problem in the community that nobody was saying anything about. That these guys were driving the buses and they didn't, we don't really know who they are. And there was just kind of an aura of, who's he and do I trust him... And we now have often African American bus drivers. And there's no conversation about that. The skin color—it's not, I can't say that it's disappeared. I'm sure it hasn't. But there's not such an untrusting [reaction] (Interview 1).

One suburban principal even said of the program, "I think we get more out of it than they [the city kids] get out of it" (Interview 5).

The idea that the suburban schools benefit more from Project Choice than the urban children who attend them was emphasized by the Project Choice coordinator for the Bridgeport region. Her assessment of the program's effects was less positive than those of the other officials involved in it. She said, "I have a real problem, having worked in the inner city for twenty eight years with taking one or two minority students and putting them in a classroom and hoping that this is going to break down barriers. Because often times what happens is their differences are magnified or their differences are exaggerated." Even she, though, believed that the program had a positive effect overall on suburban communities (Wheeler interview).

Although there have not yet been formal studies of how Project Choice affects the academic performance of urban children, there are probably benefits for at least some participants. A study of Project Concern conducted in the 1980s found that the students who joined Project Concern and persisted in the program, some of whom had been randomly selected to take part, were less likely to drop out of high school, likelier to seek out social contact with whites, less likely to give birth before the age of 18, less likely to get in trouble with the police, and more likely (for male participants) to complete two or more years of college than a control group of Hartford students (Crain, Miller, Hawes, and Peichert, 1992). One caveat in interpreting these results is that Project Concern had a very high attrition rate, about fifty percent. The large proportion of students who chose to leave the program, and the possibility that the success of those who persisted was a

result of whatever personal attributes caused them to persist, must be taken into account in evaluating it (Armor 1995, pp. 108-111).

The current Project Choice children seem to be making generally good academic progress. Interviews with the program directors also suggest that the current attrition rate is low and that students who leave the program do so either because of unmet special education needs or because their families move out of the cities and thus become ineligble for the program. One Hartford-area elementary principal, reporting to the Board of Education on her school's first year back in what was then Project Concern after a hiatus of several years, concluded that of the ten new students five had made "excellent progress," four had needed special services, and one made little progress due to "poor attendance, lack of motivation, and primarily lack of parent support" and did not continue in the program (Interview 1).

As an example of track placements for Project Choice children, take the data provided by one Hartford area middle school principal for 1999-2000. The school has two levels for major subjects in seventh grade and three in eighth grade. The four seventh graders were all in the regular (non-honors) track for English, Math, and Reading and were not receiving special education services. The eighth grade has three levels for math and English, and only students with academic difficulties take a reading class. Of eight eighth graders, four were in Track 2 (neither honors nor remedial) for math and English. Two were in Track 3 for both subjects, one of whom was enrolled in Track 3 reading. The remaining two were in Track 3 for English and Track 2 for math. Three were receiving special education services, and two more get "basic tutoring" twice weekly (Interview 5).

A New Haven area elementary principal said, "some [children] are struggling, some are not. It just depends on the individual child" (Interview 4). Anecdotal information suggests that the transition is more difficult the older a child is when it is made. The middle-school principal who provided the track-placement data said he had seen a difference between seventh-graders who began in Project Choice that year and those who had been enrolled in the school system since elementary school (Interview 5). If this anecdote were borne out by systematic research, it would be consistent with what Crain and his colleagues found in their evaluation of Project Concern (Crain, Miller, Hawes, and Peichert, 1992).

Apart from measurable academic outcomes, the ability to make connections with the dominant group, or the "cultural mainstream," also may have benefits for children. The director of the Choice Program in the Hartford region, who also ran Project Concern for many years, said that when she speaks with Project Concern graduates "I don't hear anyone say, 'well, when I was in third grade I could read better.' Generally what they're saying is, it kind of opened up opportunities for us. They will talk about the fact that it's given them a sense of security. They're black, they are Latino, but they're secure and functioning in a white world" (Carroll interview). This finding suggests that Project Choice and Project Concern both have helped connect city students to what Orfield and Ashkinaze (1991) have called "opportunity systems:" social linkages with people who have knowledge about what credentials it takes to move into higher education, skilled employment, and the professions. It is also consistent with the findings of a recent study of children who transferred from public schools in St. Louis, Missouri to schools in nearby suburbs (Wells and Crain 1997, ch. 5).

*C. Effects of the Interdistrict Magnet Schools*

According to the Connecticut State Board of Education's official policy statement on school choice, the interdistrict schools "are designed to voluntarily reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation" and also to "provide educational opportunities to students who benefit from a range of themes or teaching philosophies that include performing arts, math, science and technology, international studies, early childhood and multicultural education." The Lighthouse Schools are urban schools that are currently receiving extra state money to enhance their programs prior to becoming regular interdistrict magnets. As of 1999-2000, eighteen interdistrict magnets are operating with nineteen more in the planning phases.

Statewide in 1998-99, the first year in which PA 97-290 was implemented, the interdistrict magnet schools enrolled 3963 students. Of these students, 42.0% were white, 34.2% were black, 20.8% Latino, and 2.9% members of other races. This group included a larger proportion of minorities than in the state's overall public school population, and also a larger proportion of white students than in the urban districts where most of the magnet schools are located.

[Table 9 here]

In some cases, several school districts cooperated to design magnet schools. This was how state policy-makers had envisioned the process working. A slightly different path was taken in New Haven, which is home to a large network of magnets that enrolled 47% (1876 students) of the statewide interdistrict magnet population in 1998-99. The magnet school coordinator in New Haven used the state funds available for interdistrict schools to expand existing city-only magnets (Linehan interview; Cassidy/Magnotta

interview. Between 25 and 30 percent of students at these schools live in the suburbs. Although some New Haven parents complain about the spaces set aside for suburban students when their own children are denied admission to magnet schools, all of the schools that used to be city-only magnets have grown enough with the state money that even after setting aside spaces for suburban children they still have room for more city children than before they became interdistrict (Linehan interview).

*D. Overall Interdistrict Enrollment in Connecticut*

The Connecticut State Department of Education identifies charter schools as contributing to the reduction of racial and economic isolation. However, the charter school legislation was passed before P.A. 97-290 added integration to the goals of the charter school program, and most of the existing schools had their charters approved under the old law. Even today, the state's choice packet lists the reduction of racial isolation third in describing the charter schools' mission, after improving academic achievement and providing for educational innovation (SDE packet). According to Jack Hasegawa, some charter school operators "want to see themselves as being totally separated from that state [desegregation] goal. They want to see themselves as a separate, elevated mission" (Hasegawa interview).

[Table 10 here]

Many charter schools serve predominantly one-race populations, but others (particularly those that have multicultural themes or had their charters granted after PA 97-290) show promising ethnic and racial diversity.

Combining Project Choice, the charter schools, and the full-time interdistrict magnet schools, the total number of students involved in cross-district schools in 1998-99 was 6617.[1] The state's total public school enrollment that year was 539,025 (Connecticut Department of Education 1999a, p. E-13) Therefore, the first year of implementation of the legislation responding to *Sheff* involved slightly more than one percent of the state's students. Even in the Hartford metropolitan area, which was the immediate subject of the *Sheff* verdict, only 1724 out of approximately 100,000 public school students took part in the interdistrict-enrollment programs cited by Judge Aurigemma in her 1999 verdict.

When directly asked whether the programs have contributed to the reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, Jack Hasegawa replied, "We're reducing racial isolation in funny ways, and in pockets. And not doing any of the designed programs really. . . . you still have the greatest gain in diversity from the vocational-technical schools, which have an unblemished record, with 100% of the schools being more diverse than the districts that send kids to them. Or at least the district in which they are actually physically present" (Hasegawa interview). The eighteen vocational-technical and nineteen vocational-agricultural schools, which Connecticut now lists among its school choice programs, fit oddly into both the current understanding of "educational excellence" and into the diversity concept. They do enroll diverse populations, but they have been doing so since long before the *Sheff* suit was filed. Their emphasis on teaching job skills and preparing students for employment is quite different from what is tested on the standardized assessments that are now the basis for identifying "educational quality" and enforcing educational accountability in Connecticut and elsewhere.

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[1] 3963 in the interdistrict magnets, 1875 in the charter schools, 524 Hartford students in Project Choice, 144 New Haven students in Project Choice, 103 Bridgeport students in Project Choice, and 8 suburban

*E. Limitations of Project Choice and the Interdistrict Magnets*

Two sets of factors have contributed to the small quantitative impact of the Connecticut legislature's response to *Sheff*. The first set, which is a direct consequence of what has been variously interpreted as laudable caution or inexcusable cowardice on the part of elected officials, includes the interrelated problems of logistics, funding levels, and local commitment to or sense of "ownership" of interdistrict programs. The second set, over which elected officials in Connecticut have no control, is developments in jurisprudence that have been hostile to any use of racial categories in school admissions.

1. Logistics, Funding, and Local Commitment

Despite the sense of urgency created by the 1996 *Sheff* ruling, the amounts of money allocated for diversity-related educational programs have been small. The bills passed in 1997 and identified as part of the response to *Sheff* appropriated a total of $99 million, including $40 million for preschool programs and $20 million for the takeover of the Hartford public schools (Musante 1997). Total expenditure on *Sheff*-related programs was thus less than the 1996-97 public school budgets of the state's larger school districts, including Bridgeport ($171 million), Hartford ($247 million), New Haven ($187 million), and Waterbury ($121 million). Even some of the larger suburban districts spent more than the state allocated for the initiatives discussed in this paper (Strategic School District Profiles, 1996-97).

As legislatures typically do, the Connecticut General Assembly has made decisions about how much to spend not on the basis of what the programs were likely to

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students in Project Choice.

cost, but instead on the basis of what funding levels were politically feasible and consistent with precedents set by earlier programs. For example, the original transportation grant paid to the RESCs implementing Project Choice was based on the figure that had already been established for regional vocational-agricultural schools (Hasegawa interview).

The current transportation grant seems to be much too small for the way Project Choice has been implemented in the New Haven and Hartford regions. Since families' choices of schools are limited only by the availability of openings at suitable grade levels, children from all over either city may attend the same suburban school. However, in order to economize on transportation, students going to several suburban districts all ride the same bus. Consequently, the children's bus rides take them all around their home city and then to a number of schools in several suburbs. Residential patterns compound the problem, because several of the inner-ring suburbs are already racially diverse and/or overcrowded and do not participate in Project Choice. Numerous children who live in Hartford attend school in the towns of Granby, Suffield, Enfield, and Somers, which border Massachusetts. Even in the closer suburbs of New Haven and Hartford, population densities tend to be low and schools relatively far apart. Project Choice students therefore often face bus rides of an hour and a half each way, even under optimal circumstances. Between weather problems and other common delays (for example, drivers often must stop their buses while they regain control of unruly students), circumstances are not often optimal. Because of transportation schedules (for example, a bus that drops children off at an elementary school on the way to a middle school with an

early opening time), students often arrive at school early and must be supervised until the day's activities officially begin.

To some extent, long bus rides are an inevitable part of a regional school choice program. However, if more funding was available for transportation, some of the worst problems caused by having children travel to multiple schools and towns on the same bus could be solved. Another possibility, which would cost even more than increasing the transportation grant, would be for the state to appropriate more money for the per-student grant to suburbs that receive Project Choice students, thereby increasing the number of students per district and potentially achieving greater economies of scale.

Increasing the per-student grant to the receiving towns may be necessary for another reason as well. In order to underscore the idea that Open Choice students are full members of the districts in which they attend school, rather than temporary guests, the legislature approved a measure in 1999 that will entitle any child enrolled through Open Choice to remain in the suburban district until he or she completes twelfth grade. Previously, districts had been required to keep Open Choice students only until they completed the highest grade of the school in which they first enrolled, although the norm in the districts participating in the earlier Project Concern program had always been to keep children until they graduated.

In theory, the K-12 guarantee is excellent public policy. In practice, unless it is coupled with much larger per-student grants to the suburban towns, it may have the perverse consequence of reducing the number of spaces made available for Open Choice students. The $2000 per student grant is adequate as a reward for making extra school capacity, which would otherwise go unused, available to city children on a short-term

basis (one superintendent compared the situation to airlines auctioning off unused tickets at the last minute over the Internet). It may prove insufficient to induce participation by suburban towns facing capacity crises (as many are), if accepting a first-grader in 2000 implies a legal commitment to educate that child through 2012. The superintendent who made the airline ticket comparison contrasted the new legal mandate with his former policy of attempting, but not guaranteeing, accomodation of city children through 12th grade:

> It's one thing to act upon the good will of the district than the superintendent to try to find a way to engineer the situation, keep things quiet, whatever you have to do to keep kids in because you wanted to. But it's another thing to have them jammed down your throat. . . . our middle school is a real bottle neck of enrollment. We have some of the best enrollments in the state in the elementary, particularly our primary grades. And we have high enrollment, at least in terms of our reference school, the middle school. Now we're being told that any student we take we must keep. So I'm looking at larger cohorts coming up in the lower elementary schools into the middle school and asking the question, OK, what do you do, where's your obligation. The first obligation is to the taxpayers and to the residents of the community. And so as a result I've said we can accept no new [Choice] students (Interview 3).

It is not entirely fair to attribute these comments to a lack of generosity; the political reality for superintendents is that their job depends upon the good will of the Board of Education and ultimately of voters for whom local property taxes and school quality are more immediate priorities than educating city children.

The state could in theory redesign Open Choice according to the principle of creating surplus space (more classrooms, more teachers) in suburban districts for city children to fill. If this happened, Open Choice would become much more like the interdistrict magnet schools. However, this change would be quite expensive both in

terms of capital costs and operating budgets, and the state legislature's own commitment to increasing funding for interdistrict programs is uncertain.

None of the three state Department of Education officials interviewed for this study perceive the 1999 Superior Court verdict (which endorsed the state response to *Sheff* thus far) as a reason for the state to become complacent about its diversity policies. In their minds, although the judge criticized the plaintiffs for going back to court too soon and declared that the state was taking satisfactory steps toward complying with the 1996 Supreme Court ruling, she also made it clear that she would continue to monitor the state's actions. As one said, "what is 'continue doing what you're doing?' Is it level coordinating, is it a consistent expansion, can you determine that? It's up to the legislature to make a judgment as to what they think it is" (Cassidy/Magnotta interview). Given the vast range of programs competing for legislative attention and funding, there is a large risk that the state General Assembly will be tempted to back away from its commitment to the diversity programs. According to another Department of Education official, "That the judge didn't order targets, dates, or programs makes them—them being the legislature in particular but also parts of the general public—think that we've dodged that bullet and all we have to do is sort of maintain, and now, we get the Governor saying back to us now 'can we reduce this a little bit? Can we take a little money out of here? Do we have to have so many magnet schools?'" (Hasegawa interview).

2. The Broader Legal Climate

Federal courts, which twenty-five years ago had a reputation for stubbornly insisting upon racial balance in spite of public opposition, have recently tended to back

away from racial goals and even to invalidate them entirely. In 1998, the First Circuit Court of Appeals found that a system designed to produce racial and ethnic diversity at Boston Latin School, a public school with competitive admissions, violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution (*Wessmann v. Gittens*, 1998). In September, 1999, a ruling (*Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*) in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina called for an end to thirty years of race-based student assignment in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Public Schools (Smith and Cenziper, 1999).

Although neither of these cases directly affects Connecticut, both the U.S. Office of Civil Rights and the office of the Connecticut Attorney General have advised state and local officials not to use race as a criterion for assigning students to schools, except in very specific instances. Ed Linehan, who runs the magnet school program in New Haven, said that the state lawyers' advice was more cautious than that of the federal lawyers', insisting that the use of racial criteria is <u>never</u> legal (Linehan interview). At the same time, the Connecticut public schools are currently under an order to desegregate issued by the state Supreme Court in 1996. Implementing the *Sheff* remedies thus requires something of a tightrope walk: the state must be able to show progress toward racial integration but also must be able to demonstrate that it has not made this progress by means of quotas or racial balance targets.

Ironically, the balancing rod state policy makers have used to stay on the school-desegregation legal tightrope is the de facto racial segregation of most Connecticut

communities. Because the overwhelming majority of the state's communities are either predominantly white or predominantly nonwhite, targeting programs geographically can be a rough proxy for racial targeting. As the directors of the state's magnet school program said, "We don't select you on the basis of your being white or your being black. What we do is select you is from various suburban districts and urban districts. We wouldn't operate a program like this if it was just white kids. That's not the purpose. Magnet schools have a stated purpose which is the reduction of racial isolation. And in this case we select kids based on where they live, not on their color" (Cassidy/Magnotta interview). In administering Open Choice, two out of the three RESCs "have followed exactly the direction given to them by our [state department of education] legal counsel, which is that you can't ask them on the application form. You may register it in the process" (Hasegawa interview).

The inability (or disinclination) to use race as a criterion for participating in magnet schools and Open Choice further reduces the desegregative effect of these already small programs. The idea behind two-way transfers between city and suburban schools is for white students to come to the city and minority students to go to the suburbs. In practice, white students leave city schools through Open Choice, and minority students enroll in them. Of the 882 students participating in Open Choice in 1998-99, 40 were either white students going to the suburbs or students of color coming into the cities. In 1999-2000, 1226 students in the Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven regions participated in Project Choice, of whom 131 were transferring in the "wrong" direction from the perspective of desegregation. Similarly, of 513 suburban students in the New Haven interdistrict magnets in 1999-2000, 284 are black or Latino. In the case of these

magnet schools, though, it should be noted that some proportion of students of all races who live in New Haven would not be in the city public schools at all if not for the magnet programs.

One of the New Haven magnet school principals claimed that "We try not to go into a town that has very few minority kids and take minority kids" (Vigliotti interview), and one of the state magnet school coordinators suggested that "if in any year it's [enrollment] really skewed to one race you just change your recruiting next year to target the groups you need to bring into the school" (Cassidy/Magnotta interview). Hasegawa noted, however, that the federal climate "makes our legal department extremely nervous about anything that we would propose with a specific remedy." "Is it illegal for us to not put race as a question on the Hartford applications, but for Hartford to consciously put 90 percent of the application forms for Choice in the buildings that have the highest concentration of black students, and five percent of those in the buildings that have the highest concentration of white students?" (Hasegawa interview) Changes in the federal legal climate are certainly beyond the control of state officials in Connecticut, and how the tension between the *Sheff* ruling and federal jurisprudence will evolve bears watching.

Ten to twenty years ago, the main controversy concerning desegregation policy was over whether voluntary measures, like magnet schools, or mandatory reassignment of students was the more effective way to integrate public school systems. Advocates of mandatory measures, such as Hochschild (1984), insisted that after the initial controversy passes, they produce stably integrated schools and gradually increasing public support. Rossell (1990) argued to the contrary that although voluntary measures seem at first to have a smaller effect than mandatory ones, they create more true interracial exposure in

the long run because they do not inspire as much "white flight" as the mandatory policies. Christine Rossell has made this argument as an expert witness in the *Sheff* trials.

Although Judge Aurigemma cited Rossell's testimony in support of her conclusion that the legislative response to *Sheff* has been sufficient thus far, the factual situation in Connecticut is quite different from the ones addressed in Rossell's 1990 book on voluntary integration. The cities Rossell discusses are all served by only one school system and were all less than three-quarters minority at the time when large-scale magnet school plans were implemented. By contrast, in 1998-99 Hartford's public school enrollment was over 90% minority, Bridgeport's was almost 90% minority, and New Haven's was 87.5% minority. The question in Connecticut is not how to prevent "white flight" but how to remediate the effect it has already had—the concentration of minority students in only a few of the state's 166 school districts. The school choice, magnet schools, and charter schools put in place in Connecticut have had positive effects but simply do not make up a "voluntary desegregation plan" in the same sense that Buffalo, New York or Cambridge, Massachusetts had voluntary desegregation plans in the 1980s.

Indeed, the resolution of the "voluntary versus mandatory" dispute is increasingly moot. Policy makers have proceeded as if it were true that voluntary programs are the only ones that will be politically acceptable and effective in practice. More importantly, legal challenges to racial classification affect voluntary desegregation programs as much as they affect mandatory ones. The *Wessmann* case, after all, concerned admission to just the sort of magnet school that Rossell advocates. The successful challenge to race-based assignment of students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg ended a system that had increasingly relied upon choice and magnet schools. The Connecticut case contributes to the growing

body of knowledge about interdistrict school choice. More importantly, it also calls attention to issues that must be addressed if either desegregation or equal educational opportunity is to be achieved in the current legal and political environment.

## II. CONNECTICUT'S PROGRAMS AS A TEST OF INTERDISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE

Connecticut's policy response to *Sheff v. O'Neill*, though not intended primarily as a test of school choice, also provides insight into how a larger-scale choice program might work. In particular, the data from Connecticut shed some light on the issue of whether the families taking advantage of school choice are more affluent, or more likely to be white, than the general population. Interviews also give a preliminary idea of what information and criteria are being used to make choices, though a definitive answer to this question would require interviews with the families and students themselves.

### *A. Who Participates in School Choice?*

Urban students' demand for spaces in Project Choice has been strong although not all suburban spaces have been used due to mismatches between the spaces offered (grade level and location) and the needs and preferences of students taking part. All three RESCs use lotteries to select participants from among applicants. In Bridgeport, the RESC does very little recruitment "because the Bridgeport parents are very aware of it. They start calling as early as September asking about applications" because "there is a lot of controversy within the town. Things have come out in the newspaper about the

conditions of the schools. The physical conditions of the schools. There have been a lot of turmoil in terms of administrators" (Wheeler interview). The New Haven and Hartford area RESCs advertise in the city schools (Bailey/Saltos and Carroll interviews).

Suburban families have also displayed willingness to send their children to school in the cities. 78 suburban children use Open Choice to attend school in New Haven and Hartford, both in "lighthouse schools" and the regular schools. The interdistrict magnets, which are separate from Open Choice, also enroll signficant numbers of suburban children. In New Haven, for example, 513 suburban children attend interdistrict magnet schools. According to one interdistrict magnet school principal, "there are a lot of parents that want their kids to have the ability to connect in New Haven and they also want their kids to have the ability to have a diverse population" (Vigliotti interview). Charles Cassidy of the state Department of Education reported meeting many suburban white parents who "grew up in the city and they want their kids to experience what they experienced. Having education in a diverse environment" (Cassidy/Magnotta interview).

1. Suburban-to-Urban Transfers by Minority Students

However, reversing the apparent intent of the programs, the interdistrict magnets and Open Choice are also used by minority students who live in the suburbs to attend school in the cities (a small number of urban white students also attend school in the suburbs via Open Choice). Large majorities of the suburban students attending school in Hartford and New Haven through Open Choice are black and Latino. In the first year of the program, only three of the eight suburban students using Project Choice to go to school in cities were white. In the second year (1999-2000), no suburban children

officially entered the Bridgeport schools, but the Project Choice director knew of one minority student who had done so (Wheeler interview). Of 31 suburban children attending school in New Haven, 22 were members of minority racial groups (16 black, 2 Latino, and 4 "other"). Of 45 going into Hartford, 41 were minorities (25 black, 15 Latino, and one Asian).[2]

In some cases, including the one suburban student attending school in Bridgeport, these are children whose families moved to the suburbs and who did not want to leave their old schools and friends behind. According to Hasegawa, the children are "not finding the suburban schools that friendly. They're not finding, in some instances, the kind of services that they're accustomed to," such as special and bilingual education (Hasegawa interview). The parent liaison for the New Haven area RESC said bluntly that the minority students are attending school in the cities because they are "trying to be around people like them." The choice program director for the New Haven region mentioned another concern, that parents of all races who work in the city seem to be responding to well-publicizied incidents like the Columbine High School massacre by placing their children in schools close to where they work so that they can be available in an emergency (Bailey/Saltos interview).

Taking New Haven's interdistrict magnets as a sample of the interdistrict magnet program overall, similar patterns hold. Minority students make up at least one-third, and in some cases more than two thirds, of the suburban enrollment at each school.

[Table 11 here]

[2] The source for New Haven data is Area Cooperative Educational Services; for the Hartford data it is the Capitol Region Educational Council.

According to Ed Linehan, coordinator of the magnet school program in New Haven, the key to shifting the balance of suburban participation to include more white children is to expand recruitment and let positive word-of-mouth on the programs spread. He claims that when New Haven's magnet schools first opened to suburban participation, they attracted mainly students of color, but the pattern has since shifted. For example, when Career High School first admitted suburban students, nearly all applicants were admitted because demand for the spaces was low. The suburban applicants came disproportionately from suburbs closer to the city with relatively large minority populations. Over time, the general attractiveness of the urban choice increases and the range of suburban residents interested in it grows (Linehan interview). However, as Table 11 shows, over half of Career High School's suburban students are members of racial minorities.

2. Racial Patterns in Urban-to-Suburban Transfers

Focusing on the urban-to-suburban transfers facilitated by Open Choice, the racial composition of the group of students leaving urban schools differs significantly from that of the urban school systems as a whole (see Table 1). Students must have been previously enrolled in the public schools in order to participate in the program. White students have not been dramatically more likely than students of other races to participate, though a growth in the proportion of white New Haven Project Choice students from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 bears watching. There is a potentially problematic gap between Latino and African-American participation. In 1998-99), 88.2% of Hartford Project Choice students were black and 11.4% Latino, compared with 41.7% and 52.3%,

respectively, for the city as a whole. The gap was a bit smaller in Bridgeport, where 42.6% of students overall and 25.2% of Project Choice students were Latino, and smallest in New Haven (27.8% overall, 17.4% in Project Choice). The proportion of Latino children in Project Choice fell from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 in New Haven (see Table 6)

Survey data and interviews suggest several general explanations for this pattern. Latino families may be more satisfied with their children's schools than parents from other ethnic groups (Olson, 1999), or may be reluctant to leave established bilingual and ESL programs for school systems that lack them. Jack Hasegawa suggested that Latino parents seem to place a higher value on having their children in school close to home, preferably within walking distance. He also cited a common reluctance by Latinos, influenced by unpleasant contact with immigration officials in the U.S. or experiences with authoritarian governments elsewhere, "to be involved much with governmental processes in general" (Hasegawa interview).

Factors more specific to local context seemed to be at work in limiting Latino participation in Project Choice in the Bridgeport and Hartford areas. According to the Bridgeport Choice director,

> The first year of the program, actually the Hispanic, Latino population hadn't gotten the word. The communities in Bridgeport are very closely tied. If you are an African American in Bridgeport and I'm an African American in Bridgeport, we may not know each other personally but we know everybody else that knows you and that knows me. The word got out to the African American community somehow, possibly through the school system in Bridgeport because they employ so many of them (Wheeler interview).

The director said that she did more targeting outreach to the Latino community the second year of the program. However, the composition of the Project Choice population remained almost unchanged (see Table 3).

In Hartford, the early history of the old Project Concern program skewed participation in Open Choice toward African-Americans. When Project Concern began in 1966, very few Latinos lived in Hartford and the African-American population was concentrated in the North End of the city in the schools targeted by the program. As the Latino presence in Hartford grew, two factors prevented them from taking part in Project Concern. First, "it was viewed historically as a 'black' program." Second, and probably more importantly, Hartford Latinos did not settle in predominantly black neighborhoods, but rather tended to live in the southern end of the city, and the resources available to Project Concern did not permit increasing the transportation budget to reach schools there. When Open Choice took over from Project Concern in 1998, the (mostly African-American) children already in Project Concern were all picked up in the new program (Carroll interview). The balance between black and Latino children from Hartford in Open Choice seems to be moving closer to that of the city schools' enrollment overall (see Table 8).

3. The "Creaming" Controversy

One of the biggest fears about public school choice is that it will tend to "cream" from urban schools the most academically talented children, the wealthiest children, and the children whose parents most value schooling, leaving the least attractive schools to educate the most disadvantaged children. Milwaukee's public voucher experiment (see

Witte 2000), and some proposed choice experiements, are explicitly limited to children from impoverished families. Unlike these, Connecticut's Choice Program is not limited by income, cannot screen children by race, and does not emply any other selection criteria.

The racial analysis above shows that although not all racial groups participate in Open Choice at the same rate, it is not fair to say that Open Choice facilitates "white flight." Because children must have been enrolled in public school in order to be eligible for the Open Choice program, it is drawing from an overwhelmingly non-white and economically disadvantaged population without any specific targeting. The "white flight" battle is essentially already lost, since so many white families have fled Connecticut's urban school districts by other means during the past few decades. There are also relatively few middle-class families with children enrolled in Connecticut urban public schools. In 1998-99, 95.6% of children attending public school in Bridgeport were eligible for free and reduced-price meals (FARM). Comparable figures for Hartford and New Haven were 89.3% and 57.5%, respectively. Official figures on FARM eligibility may understate the prevalence of poverty and near-poverty, since many schools simply feed all the children who attend and do not put a high priority on completing paperwork. Only the New Haven area RESC tracks the meal-eligibility status of children in Open Choice; in 1998-99 they were actually somewhat more likely (78.4%) than the student population as a whole to be eligible for FARM.

One suburban school superintendent in the New Haven area spoke extensively about the issue of "creaming" and the kinds of children who attend school in his district

through Open Choice. He began by declaring that what he has seen is "a validation of all the arguments against vouchers:"

> 92% of the New Haven school population is minority. How come 30% of our Project Choice kids are white? What does that tell you? And bright flight in that there seems a disproportionate number of children of color in races other than white who are the children of Yale professors or that kind of thing who are here. Professionals who live in New Haven who have the savvy enough to get into the Project Choice pool and send their kids here. . . .Two or three of them are competing among the very best kids that [the town] has and you wouldn't imagine that many would out of a group of randomly selected children. So you know it's self selection (Interview 3).

On the other hand, according to the same suburban superintendent, some of the children who enrolled via Open Choice had been in academic difficulty in New Haven. Some parents appeared to have been "shopping" for a better special education program. Also, the assistant superintendent, who had previously worked in New Haven, pointed out that "We had some very difficult children. Children that we realized were also being kind of shuffled around New Haven schools because they couldn't deal with the child either" (Interview 3). Studies of the Milwaukee choice program have suggested that children participating in the city-only voucher program are slightly more likely than average to have been in academic difficulty (Witte 2000, p. 73). However, Milwaukee students transferring to the suburbs seem to have had slightly higher reading scores than the average city public school student (Witte 2000, p. 81).

The state officials in charge of the interdistrict magnet school program insisted that the state would not allow such schools to discriminate among students on the basis of talent or past academic performance, despite public pressure to create "gifted and talented" academies:

> You've got to be willing to accept all kids. If you want to set up a math, science, technology [school], you can't offer just high level courses. You're going to have to offer courses [for] kids that don't have quite the experience or have been able to take advantage. If you come from the city of Hartford, you probably haven't had the availability for the instruction to be able to compete with the kids from the suburbs and you're going to put them in the same school. . . .you can't say well now we have maybe five kids from Hartford we think that can compete in this school. As opposed to a couple hundred kids from the suburbs (Cassidy/Magnotta interview).

Cassidy did point out that it would probably be appropriate for the charter schools to require entrance examinations or auditions, because their mission is defined differently from that of the interdistrict magnets. However, none of the current group of charter schools caters to an elite population, and some specifically identify their goal as improving services for children who have not succeeded in traditional public schools.

*B. How Families Choose Schools*

Another controversial issue in school choice has been whether the factors that motivate families to choose schools are ones that will push schools to compete on the basis of educational quality, or whether families will emphasize school characteristics like location and social status that are not necessarily the same as quality. The evidence thus far from Connecticut, derived from interviews with state and local officials, calls into question the model of families as rational consumers envisioned by choice advocates such as Chubb and Moe (1990). Further interviewing of the families themselves is of course necessary for a complete analysis. Based on preliminary research, although a decision to leave Connecticut's urban school districts is probably motivated largely by a search for educational quality, the decision about where to move

to is often not. Wells and Crain also found this to be the case for students transferring out of the St. Louis public schools (1997, pp. 195-97).

For example, the Benjamin Jepson Magnet School in New Haven offers an environment different from anything else in the city public schools and nearly all of what is offered in the suburbs. Children spend the day in multi-age classrooms and are classified only by their age, not their academic grade level. Within each classroom, students spend a great deal of time on cooperative projects and make choices about what they will study. The students I met, who appeared to be on a first-name basis with their teacher, were quietly and happily engaged in reading and talking about books in small groups. When I asked the principal whether the innovative educational model was what attracted families to the school, he said that for some it was, but

> at times we do get people in here for the wrong reasons. I think they see it as a 5 year olds will be able to stay the whole day [Jepson has full-day kindergarten]. Very accommodating staff. Very accommodating principal. Very flexible. A lot of state money. So I don't think they always come for the philosophical piece. Then sometimes a deterrent, a small percentage of parents actually don't agree with the program. And then start to work against us. Because they're in and they were in not for the reasons, genuine reasons, they are in more for child rearing reasons as far as time management and supervision of children (Vigliotti interview).

Despite the name of the program, families participating in Open Choice in Bridgeport actually had very little role in choosing their children's school. In the first year of the program, before the current coordinator started in the position, the children who would be participating were chosen by lottery and then their parents told of the available openings (which towns had seats at the appropriate grade level) and invited to choose among them. Logistics, particularly transportation, were not taken into account, so the program "had one street in Bridgeport with four buses on it" and one child whose

transportation cost $8000 for the year. When the current coordinator started her job, "I knew having worked lotteries with magnet schools within the city of Bridgeport that you can't continue to operate in this way." Now, "the understanding is if you apply to Project Choice you are willing to accept any of the alternatives given." After the lottery that selects participants, the coordinator compiles the children's addresses and grade levels and the available suburban places, and the bus company has the final say on who goes where based on economical bus routes: "I have to say to the bus company, this child was pulled, second grade, here's where I have my second grade openings...you tell me what would be easiest" (Wheeler interview).

Even in Hartford and New Haven, where Open Choice families are required to make an active choice of a suburban school, very few seek out data on academic performance. The New Haven RESC makes Strategic School Profiles available for parents to examine, and the director estimates that only about four percent do. Parents are required to list specific schools, not just school districts, as their choices on the application. Many do not:

> And I'd call them up and I'd say, 'we can't have just the district. You've got to tell me what school within that district that you want, because some of them had like four schools within one district. And they'd literally say, 'well, you choose.' They'd just heard that town had money, or a really great system....They just want their child out at that point. So, 'you choose.' 'Well, I can't do that. You're going to have to tell me what school you want.' 'Well, how close is it to New Haven, which one is closer to New Haven?' (Bailey/Saltos interview)

Some families, especially of special-education children, actually found that they were less satisfied with their new schools than they had been in New Haven.

In Hartford, families can request a particular school district on their application, but the RESC does not know at the time of the applications where spaces will be

available in the suburbs. After the lottery, the RESC calls the families in the order they were drawn, informs them where openings exist at the right grade level for their child, and invites them to choose. Some families choose right away; others speak to other families before choosing or request more information from the RESC. According to the Choice Program director, "one of the things I have often heard from families when they've requested particular districts is that they're doing it because of word of mouth. They know someone who has a child in the district; they know something about the district" (Carroll interview).

Race and ethnicity may also be a factor in which schools families choose. Sometimes, as in the case of suburban white students attending magnet schools in cities, the goal is to have a more racially diverse school experience. There is also significant evidence suggesting that families seek out schools already attended by people like them. In addition to the prevalence of minority students among those from the suburbs attending interdistrict magnets and using Open Choice to enroll at urban schools, the New Haven RESC director said that urban students' choices of suburban schools were sometimes shaped by considerations of ethnicity: "And a lot of the families feel that if they go into, if you're Asian, if you go into the Orange area, that they tend to all follow each other. [One district] said 'will you stop sending us all these Italian kids,' because they have enough Italian kids" (Bailey/Saltos interview). Such choices are completely understandable, but they are not the sort of choices that give the movement for school choice its political appeal.

One final point raised by the Connecticut choice experience is that although we often speak of "families" choosing schools, or parents making the best choices for their

children, parents and children do not necessarily agree on school decisions. Presumably, when families leave the cities for the suburbs, educational quality is one of the factors driving the decision. However, in some cases, the children end up using Open Choice to attend school in the city anyway. Also, school officials in several suburban districts said they were aware of Open Choice children enrolled in the suburbs against their will. The children's dissent does not necessarily mean these are bad choices, as any parent can attest. But, these are often the children who make poor academic and social adjustments and gain less from the program. Certainly, the idea of "schools of choice" as places where students and teachers all share a sense of purpose needs to account for the reality that this will not always be the case, especially for older children with a stronger sense of their preferences.

## III. THE ENDS AND MEANS OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The current political and legal situation is one in which the debate over whether school integration should be voluntary or mandatory has lost much of its relevance. In Connecticut and elsewhere, the old desegregation goal of eliminating racially identifiable schools (*Green v. New Kent County*, 1968) has given way to a goal of pursuing "diversity" without aiming for specific racial goals or using race as an admissions criterion (*Wessmann v. Gittens*, 1998). The important issues now are what it means to "pursue diversity," what diversity has to do with educational quality and equal opportunity, and how the available policy instruments may be used to pursue diversity, quality, and equal opportunity.

*A. The Means Available*

Regardless of whether we identify court-ordered integration as a success or a failure, it is unlikely that supporters of school desegregation will ever again be able to count on the sort of legal pressure that characterized education policy in the 1960s and early 1970s. Different legal strategies, such as aiming for socioeconomic rather than racial integration, may be attempted in the future (see Kahlenberg 1997).

The Connecticut case shows the importance of understanding what else has to happen, in legislatures and elsewhere, for legal pronouncements to be made real as effective public policy. After the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, little progress was made on ending legalized segregation of schools in the South until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 denied federal funds to segregated organizations and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 began the practice of large-scale federal aid to K-12 education. After 1965, many southern districts grudgingly integrated for the sake of the financial assistance (see Rosenberg, 1991). In order to promote school integration and educational opportunity at the state level, policy makers must concentrate on building institutional capacity and on effectively using the institutional capacity they do have.

One example of how to do this is the expansion of interdistrict magnet schools in New Haven. The state government had intended interdistrict magnets to be planned and operated by consortia of school districts brought together specifically for the sake of making a new school. In the late 1990s, the New Haven Public Schools had a network of successful magnet schools already operating, coordinated by Ed Linehan, who recognized

a huge opportunity in the new state funds for interdistrict magnets. Linehan invited suburban districts to send students to the existing schools, many of which were either rebuilt, renovated, or expanded with state funds. Thus, the city gained more spaces for its own students in higher-quality facilities, and the state gained interdistrict magnets that did not require a great deal of start-up planning.

Given the residential geography of Connecticut, significant expansion of interdistrict educational programs is likely to require investment in infrastructure—increasing the size of suburban schools so that they can take more Project Choice students, or constructing more interdistrict magnet and charter schools in areas where they can attract diverse student populations. One proposal that was made in 1997 but did not survive into the final version of P.A. 97-290 would have linked state school construction aid to integration goals (Russell 1998, p. 34). If the state of Connecticut is really serious about producing a significant increase in the numbers of children attending school in diverse environments, this is an idea that should be revisited. Such an alteration in state priorities, which would undoubtedly be perceived as coercive by local communities, in turn requires a clear sense of the end to which "diversity" is used as a means.

*B. The Ends to Pursue*

As I have argued elsewhere (McDermott 1999, pp. 36-38), "educational quality and diversity" is both a broader and a narrower goal than school integration. It is broader in the sense that an agenda of enhancing quality and diversity could bring into consideration important issues other than the demographic characteristics of school

populations, such as student achievement and the effectiveness of urban schools. In the 1999 *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* litigation, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools cited achievement gaps between black and white students as evidence that the district had not yet attained unitary status, despite thirty years of student reassignment for racial balance (Cenziper 1999; Smith and Cenziper 1999).[3] "Quality and diversity" is also a narrower goal than desegregation, in the sense that individual schools and programs could promote quality and diversity for their students without having an effect on the overall structure of educational opportunity in a community, region, or state.

Calls for desegregation and diversity can emphasize the expected benefits for either minority students, white students, or both. These claims about benefits have been entangled throughout the *Sheff* litigation. The majority opinion in the 1996 decision opens by declaring that "the public elementary and secondary students in Hartford suffer daily from the devastating effects that racial and ethnic isolation, as well as poverty, have had on their education" and that "the needy schoolchildren of Hartford have waited long enough" (*Sheff v. O'Neill* 1996, p. 1). At trial, the state had argued that the problems in the Hartford public schools were the result of concentrated poverty, not racial segregation, and that by substantially equalizing school funding and resources between the city and the suburbs it had carried out its constitutional duty to provide equal educational opportunity. The Supreme Court majority declined to untangle the effects of poverty and racial segregation, instead declaring that the state's constitutional guarantee of education is "informed by the constitutional prohibition against segregation (*Sheff v. O'Neill* 1996, p. 25)." This reference is to the Connecticut constitution's guarantee that

[3] "Unitary status" is a legal term referring to the point at which all vestiges of past racial segregation (which in the South took the form of maintaining dual school systems for white and black children) have been

"no person shall be denied the equal protection of the law nor be subjected to segregation or discrimination in the exercise or employment of his or her civil or political rights" (Article 1, Section 20).

Not all of the *Sheff* plaintiffs are residents of Hartford; the group also includes a few suburban children to emphasize the general harm of segregated education. In the Court majority's words, "racial and ethnic segregation has a pervasive and invidious impact on schools" (*Sheff v. O'Neill* 1996, p. 33). Racial and ethnic segregation jeopardizes "shared values" necessary for democratic functioning (*Sheff v. O'Neill* 1996, p. 34). For all these reasons, "the current school assignment scheme...violates the plaintiffs' fundamental right to a substantially equal educational opportunity" (*Sheff v. O'Neill* 1996, p. 38). Later in the opinion, the Court identified the issue at stake as "disparity in access to an unsegregated educational environment" without referring specifically to the city (*Sheff v. O'Neill* 1996, p. 42).

To date, the state response to *Sheff* has done more to enhance "diversity and awareness of diversity" in schools than to link "diversity" to equal educational opportunity. This is not to say that the state has ignored the plight of children in Hartford and other cities. However, the primary legislative initiatives that directly address urban issues do so in ways that do not include desegregation: early childhood education, reading initiatives, the takeover of the Hartford schools, and the accountability system enacted in 1999. Desegregation, in the forms of voluntary interdistrict choice, magnets, and charter schools, has been enacted because of its contribution to diversity for its own sake rather than because of any expected causal link between desegregation and school improvement or the expansion of educational opportunity.

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removed from a school district previously found to have engaged in segregation.

These are the links that must now be further understood and articulated. Many people working on the diversity programs in Connecticut embrace a definition of educational quality in which multicultural tolerance and understanding are central. This definition is also one that has been employed by defenders of affirmative action in admission to higher education (see, for example, Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen 1998, 1999; Gurin 1999). It is not, however, the one that underlies current efforts to hold K-12 schools accountable for student performance. The current understanding of "school improvement" at the K-12 level is focused on achievement in core academic areas rather than on students' socialization to life in a diverse society.

In this context, diversity seems to be an add-on, a "fad" or "frill," when school districts and parents are concentrating on test scores. The panel appointed by Governor Rowland to examine potential responses after the 1996 *Sheff* decision was called the Educational Improvement Panel, not the "Desegregation Panel" or "Diversity Panel." According to people involved in the process, an early draft of that panel's recommendations placed "Reducing Racial Isolation" at the top of the list and "Improving Teaching and Learning" at the bottom. In the final product, the two had switched positions. Although the panel report claimed that the ordering of the recommendations was not substantively significant, the fact that it was changed at all suggests that some participant or participants did attach importance to the order (Russell 1998, p. 21). The tendency to separate school improvement measures from diversity and to rank improvement as more important is common to people who do not believe that racial diversity is an important goal and to people who believe that racial diversity in

schools will only be achieved once urban schools improve enough to attract white and middle-class students in large numbers.

According to Jack Hasegawa, the tendency to separate quality and diversity exists in both cities and suburbs. Some suburbs have responded as if the state mandate for "quality and diversity" allows them to emphasize one or the other. In Hasegawa's words, in the absence of major remediation efforts, adding "a group of children who do not do well on standardized testing" to a school mostly attended by "those kids who are for a variety of reasons going to do well on standardized testing" tends to produce "a lower [aggregate] test score, which for the public means reduced student achievement." Under these circumstances, "people in districts like the one where I [Hasegawa] live...think that they're being allowed to choose" and take "quality" over "diversity" (Hasegawa interview).

Urban school officials similarly are under pressure to concentrate on raising their own students' test scores. In Hartford, superintendent Anthony Amato (the city's third since the state takeover) vowed when he took office in 1999 that the city would never again have the lowest Mastery Test scores in the state, and he committed the district to an intense program of remediation and test preparation that has in fact lifted it out of last place (Archer, 2000). Diversity does not loom large in Amato's plans. According to Hasegawa, "one of the first things that Amato said when he came was he was not interested in interdistrict anything, because his primary obligation and concern was raising the achievement of Hartford students and he couldn't do that if he had to be worrying about other districts...So he came in with a pledge, actually, not to participate and he had to be convinced by the commissioner [State Education Commissioner Ted

Sergi] that this was not an option. Not an optional program" (Hasegawa interview). Support for interdistrict programs has been strong in New Haven, which has had the same superintendent since 1990, but it is easy to imagine how Amato's success in lifting Hartford out of last place on the Mastery Tests could put pressure on other districts to follow his lead and emphasize test performance over other goals.

*C. Why Desegregate?*

What is at stake in desegregation is different for white students and students of color. One need not be a racial separatist to believe that white suburban children who are uncomfortable when they first interact with diverse peers in college or the workplace have been harmed far less fundamentally than urban children whose schooling has taken place in a disadvantaged environment without many ties to the mainstream opportunity structures. Particularly in a legal and political climate that is hostile to the idea of desegregation for its own sake, policy makers must be able to answer the question "why desegregate?" in a way that clearly addresses issues of educational quality and opportunity.

"Racial diversity" is not the same thing as equal educational opportunity. If the proverbial man from Mars were to visit Hartford, he would not understand why the city's schools are at the center of a controversy over racial integration. The Hartford public schools are only 42.1% black, after all, and the Latino population that makes up 51.9% of the student population includes children with varying mixtures of European, Native American, and African ancestry. What matters for educational policy is not racial diversity per se but rather the links between the racial composition of a school, its overall

poverty level, and its ties to institutions that enhance educational and economic opportunity.

Advocates of desegregation do not believe that black children must sit next to whites in order to learn, but they do take seriously the evidence that all children's academic performance suffers when they attend schools with high levels of poverty. According to one study, the reading test scores of non-poor children attending schools where more than 75% of students are poor are lower than those of poor children in schools where less than 20% of students are poor (Puma, Jones, Rock, and Fernandez 1994, cited in Orr, Stone, and Stumbo 1999, Fig. 1).

They are also skeptical of the ability of a majoritarian democratic process to channel appropriate levels of resources to schools attended mainly by minority children and located in areas already hard-hit by public and private disinvestment. The tendency of resources to flow to communities with more political power is knows as the "green follows white" phenomenon. If the 1999 *Capacchione* ruling is upheld on appeal, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system will soon provide an opportunity to test the "green follows white" idea. The ruling requires all children to be reassigned to their neighborhood schools, but because schools in metropolitan Charlotte have generally been built halfway between the inner city and the suburbs in order to facilitate integration, some neighborhoods in the city have nowhere near the school capacity they would need to accomodate all their children. School officials estimate that they will need to build two new schools and renovate 26 others.

In the fall of 1999, the estimate was that the Mecklenburg County Commission would have to approve about $300 million in order to fund the construction. Supporters

of the District Court ruling claim that the public will happily support spending that promises to undo the desegregation order and directly improve city schools. Opponents fear that the necessary spending will not win public support because it is targeted toward a disproportionately poor, black population and the majority of households in the county are neither poor nor black (Smith and Rothacker 1999; Pilla 1999; North Carolina County Education Profiles 1999; Cenziper 1999). As of spring 2000, the situation is still quite unsettled. Enforcement of the 1999 ruling has been stayed pending the outcome of the school system's appeal, which means that the school system is unsure how much construction funding to request. According to one academic who served as an expert witness in the 1999 trial, liberals on the county commission may be reluctant to appropriate the construction money in order to strengthen the school system's case in its appeal. Commissioners also fear that negative publicity around the trial, in particular the school system's decision to emphasize its failure to erase the achievement gap between white and black pupils, may produce a backlash that would doom any bond issue to failure in a referendum (Steven S. Smith, personal communication, March 22, 2000).

* * *

In the early days of school desegregation, however intransigent the defenders of "the Southern way of life," the legal and moral principles were at least clear. Where dual school systems had been required by law, they were to be dismantled. Nearly five decades after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the complexity of the issues has grown even as legalized bigotry has waned. States now must decide how to pursue racial tolerance and improve educational outcomes for minority children in the absence of legal and political consensus about how they may do so. However, as the Connecticut Supreme

Court said in *Sheff v. O'Neill*, the stakes at hand are high for all children, not just urban minorities. The difficulty of the task does not absolve any level of government from the responsibility to act

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Anonymous Interview #4, Suburban School-Level Administrator, New Haven metropolitan area, February 7, 2000.

Anonymous Interview #5, Suburban School-Level Administrator, Hartford metropolitan area, February 28, 2000

Table 1
Students Leaving Urban Districts Through Project Choice, 1998-99

| | Hartford | | New Haven | | Bridgeport | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total[1] | Project Choice[2] | Total | Project Choice[3] | Total | Project Choice[4] |
| Black | 9357 (41.7%) | 465 (88.2%) | 11105 (57.4%) | 88 (61.1%) | 9393 (42.3%) | 65 (63.1%) |
| Latino | 11751 (52.3%) | 60 (11.4%) | 5371 (27.8%) | 25 (17.4%) | 9459 (42.6%) | 26 (25.2%) |
| White | 992 (4.4%) | 1 (0.2%) | 2421 (12.5%) | 21 (14.6%) | 2615 (11.8%) | 13 (12.6%) |
| Other | 356 (1.6%) | 1 (0.2%) | 439 (2.3%) | 9 (6.3%) | 754 (3.4%) | 0 |
| Total | 22456 | 527 | 19336 | 144 | 22221 | 103 |
| State-reported total[5] | | 527 | | 155 | | 103 |

[1]Source: Connecticut State Department of Education.
[2]Source: Capitol Region Educational Council (CREC), Hartford, CT.
[3]Source: Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), Hamden, CT.
[4]Source: Cooperative Educational Services (CES), Trumbull, CT.
[5]Source: Connecticut State Department of Education, *Enhancing Educational Opportunities and Achievement, Part II*, p. 53.

Table 2
Suburban Impact of Project Choice
Bridgeport Area
1998-99

| Town (total enrollment 1998-99)[3] | Total Project Choice Students 1998-99[1] | Estimated black and Latino Project Choice Students[2] | Total black and Latino enrollment, not counting Project Choice, 1998-99[3] | Estimated percent black and Latino after Project Choice, 1998-99[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Easton (965) | 4 | 3 | 17 (1.8%) | 2.1 |
| Fairfield (7599) | 23 | 20 | 304 (4.0%) | 4.3 |
| Monroe (3987) | 16 | 14 | 141 (3.5%) | 3.9 |
| Stratford (7072) | 12 | 10 | 1789 (25.3%) | 25.4 |
| Trumbull (5807) | 22 | 19 | 307 (5.3%) | 5.6 |
| Weston (2121) | 6 | 5 | 36 (1.7%) | 1.9 |
| Westport (4386) | 20 | 17 | 108 (2.5%) | 2.8 |

[1]Source: CES.
[2]Calculated from CES figures, assuming that the 87.4% of Bridgeport Project Choice students who were black and Latino were proportionally distributed across all seven receiving towns.
[3]Source: Connecticut State Department of Education.
[4]Project Choice students are not counted in the state's total enrollment figure, included in column 1. These figures were derived via the following formula: (Black and Latino students not in Project Choice ÷ Black and Latino Project Choice students)
(State 1998-99 total enrollment figure ÷ Project Choice total 1998-99)

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Table 3
Destinations of Bridgeport Project Choice Students By Race
1999-2000

| District | Latino | Black | White | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Easton | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Fairfield | 9 | 27 | 4 | 40 |
| Monroe | 5 | 7 | 1 | 16 |
| Stratford | 7 | 13 | 1 | 21 |
| Trumbull | 7 | 18 | 8 | 33 |
| Weston | 2 | 9 | 1 | 12 |
| Westport | 13 | 33 | 3 | 49 |
| Total | 44 (25.1%) | 113 (64.6%) | 18 (10.3%) | 175 |

Source: Cooperative Educational Services, Trumbull, CT.

Table 4

Project Choice Participants, 1998-99
New Haven Region
Top number is 1998-99 Project Choice enrollment[1]
Bottom number is 1998-99 regular enrollment[2]

| Town | Black | Latino | White | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ansonia | 3<br>413 | 1<br>202 | 0<br>1672 | 0<br>33 | 5<br>2320 |
| Bethany | 1<br>9 | 1<br>4 | 1<br>534 | 0<br>8 | 3<br>555 |
| Branford | 1<br>106 | 1<br>74 | 1<br>3377 | 0<br>157 | 3<br>3714 |
| Cheshire | 20<br>71 | 10<br>44 | 9<br>4658 | 3<br>164 | 42<br>4937 |
| East Haven | 1<br>58 | 1<br>170 | 1<br>3725 | 0<br>88 | 3<br>4041 |
| Hamden | 8<br>1538 | 1<br>309 | 0<br>4282 | 0<br>258 | 9<br>6387 |
| Middletown | 1<br>1267 | 1<br>332 | 0<br>3086 | 0<br>134 | 2<br>4819 |
| Milford | 8<br>85 | 0<br>74 | 0<br>7059 | 0<br>62 | 8<br>7280 |
| North Branford | 4<br>23 | 1<br>31 | 3<br>2358 | 2<br>21 | 10<br>2433 |
| North Haven | 8<br>88 | 2<br>42 | 2<br>3212 | 0<br>144 | 12<br>3486 |
| Orange | 3<br>16 | 1<br>10 | 1<br>1219 | 3<br>54 | 8<br>1299 |
| Oxford | 3<br>13 | 0<br>23 | 0<br>1295 | 0<br>16 | 3<br>1347 |
| Region 5 | 3<br>32 | 0<br>23 | 1<br>1974 | 0<br>121 | 4<br>2150 |
| Region 16 | 2<br>28 | 0<br>24 | 0<br>1704 | 0<br>19 | 2<br>1775 |
| Wallingford | 19<br>101 | 4<br>393 | 2<br>6435 | 1<br>176 | 26<br>7105 |
| Wolcott | 2<br>46 | 0<br>38 | 0<br>2887 | 0<br>34 | 2<br>3005 |
| Woodbridge | 1<br>21 | 1<br>6 | 0<br>877 | 0<br>60 | 2<br>964 |

[1]Source: ACES
[2]Source: Strategic School Profiles

Table 5

Project Choice Impact in New Haven Suburbs, 1998-99

| Town | Black<br>Top: PC[1]<br>Bot:NonPC[2] | Latino<br>Top: PC[1]<br>Bot:NonPC[2] | % Black and Latino without Project Choice | % Black and Latino with Project Choice[3] | Total<br>Top: PC[1]<br>Bot:NonPC[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ansonia | 3<br>413 | 1<br>202 | 26.5 | 26.6 | 5<br>2320 |
| Bethany | 1<br>9 | 1<br>4 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 3<br>555 |
| Branford | 1<br>106 | 1<br>74 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 3<br>3714 |
| Cheshire | 20<br>71 | 10<br>44 | 2.3 | 2.9 | 42<br>4937 |
| East Haven | 1<br>58 | 1<br>170 | 5.6 | 5.7 | 3<br>4041 |
| Hamden | 8<br>1538 | 1<br>309 | 28.9 | 29.0 | 9<br>6387 |
| Middletown | 1<br>1267 | 1<br>332 | 33.2 | 33.2 | 2<br>4819 |
| Milford | 8<br>85 | 0<br>74 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 8<br>7280 |
| North Branford | 4<br>23 | 1<br>31 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 10<br>2433 |
| North Haven | 8<br>88 | 2<br>42 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 12<br>3486 |
| Orange | 3<br>16 | 1<br>10 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 8<br>1299 |
| Oxford | 3<br>13 | 0<br>23 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 3<br>1347 |
| Region 5 | 3<br>32 | 0<br>23 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 4<br>2150 |
| Region 16 | 2<br>28 | 0<br>24 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 2<br>1775 |
| Wallingford | 19<br>101 | 4<br>393 | 7.0 | 7.3 | 26<br>7105 |
| Wolcott | 2<br>46 | 0<br>38 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 2<br>3005 |
| Woodbridge | 1<br>21 | 1<br>6 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 2<br>964 |

[1]Source: ACES

[2]Source: CT State Department of Education

[3]Project Choice students are not counted in the state's total enrollment figure, included in column 1. These figures were derived via the following formula: (Black and Latino students not in Project Choice ÷ Black and Latino Project Choice students)
(State 1998-99 total enrollment figure ÷ Project Choice total 1998-99)

Table 6
Destinations of New Haven Project Choice Students by Race
1999-2000

| | Black | Latino | White | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ansonia | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Bethany | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Branford | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Cheshire | 23 | 9 | 11 | 4 | 47 |
| East Haven | 5 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 15 |
| Hamden | 38 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 47 |
| Milford | 6 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| North Branford | 7 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 15 |
| North Haven | 18 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 32 |
| Orange | 6 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 13 |
| Region 5 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 13 |
| Seymour | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Wallingford | 48 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 70 |
| Woodbridge | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Total | 173 (60.7%) | 44 (15.4%) | 49 (17.2%) | 19 (6.7%) | 285 |

Table 7
Suburban Impact of Project Choice, 1998-99
Hartford Region

| Town (total enrollment 1998-99)[3] | Total Project Choice Students 1998-99[1] | Estimated black and Latino Project Choice Students[2] | Total black and Latino enrollment, not counting Project Choice, 1998-99[3] | Estimated percent black and Latino after Project Choice, 1998-99[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avon (2520) | 3 | 3 | 64 (2.5%) | 2.7% |
| Canton* (1508) | 34 | 34 | 60 (4.0%) | 6.0% |
| Cromwell (1819) | 4 | 4 | 151 (8.3%) | 8.5% |
| East Windsor (1512) | 4 | 4 | 129 (8.5%) | 8.8% |
| Enfield (6873) | 13 | 13 | 406 (5.9%) | 6.1% |
| Farmington* (4045) | 92 | 92 | 255 (6.3%) | 8.4% |
| Glastonbury (5715) | 46 | 46 | 344 (6.0%) | 6.8% |
| Granby* (1882) | 31 | 31 | 52 (2.8%) | 4.4% |
| Manchester (7798) | 24 | 24 | 2110 (27.0%) | 27.3% |
| Newington* (4191) | 50 | 50 | 359 (8.6%) | 9.6% |
| Plainville* (2650) | 36 | 36 | 237 (8.9%) | 10.2% |
| Rocky Hill* (2358) | 4 | 4 | 166 (7.0%) | 8.5% |
| Simsbury* (4593) | 54 | 54 | 181 (3.9%) | 5.1% |
| Southington (6444) | 10 | 10 | 250 (3.9%) | 4.0% |
| South Windsor (4810) | 49 | 49 | 327 (6.8%) | 7.7% |
| Suffield* (2098) | 23 | 23 | 74 (3.5%) | 4.6% |
| West Hartford (8835) | 36 | 36 | 1631 (18.5%) | 18.8% |
| Wethersfield (3319) | 8 | 8 | 309 (9.3%) | 9.5% |
| Windsor Locks (2023) | 3 | 3 | 142 (7.0%) | 7.2% |

[1]Source: CES.
[2]Calculated from CES figures, assuming that the 87.4% of Bridgeport Project Choice students who were black and Latino were proportionally distributed across all seven receiving towns.
[3]Source: Connecticut State Department of Education.
[4]Project Choice students are not counted in the state's total enrollment figure, included in column 1. These figures were derived via the following formula: (Black and Latino students not in Project Choice + Black and Latino Project Choice students) / (State 1998-99 total enrollment figure + Project Choice total 1998-99)

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Table 8
Destinations of Hartford Project Choice Students By Race
1999-2000

| District | Latino | Black | White | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avon | 3 | 11 | 1 | 15 |
| Berlin | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Bolton | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Bristol | 18 | 53 | 0 | 77 |
| Canton | 9 | 22 | 1 | 35 |
| Cromwell | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| East Granby | 3 | 7 | 0 | 11 |
| East Windsor | 5 | 8 | 0 | 13 |
| Enfield | 6 | 14 | 0 | 20 |
| Farmington | 7 | 74 | 0 | 84 |
| Glastonbury | 4 | 35 | 1 | 41 |
| Granby | 4 | 25 | 0 | 29 |
| Hartford | 15 | 25 | 4 | 45* |
| Manchester | 0 | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| Newington | 5 | 40 | 1 | 49 |
| Plainville | 2 | 39 | 0 | 41 |
| Region 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 11 |
| Rocky Hill | 4 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| Simsbury | 5 | 59 | 0 | 64 |
| Somers | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| South Windsor | 1 | 55 | 0 | 57 |
| Southington | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| Suffield | 2 | 22 | 1 | 25 |
| Vernon | 2 | 6 | 0 | 8 |
| West Hartford | 1 | 26 | 0 | 28 |
| Wethersfield | 5 | 6 | 0 | 11 |
| Windsor | 6 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Windsor Locks | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Total | 94 (12.8%) | 569 (77.4%) | 6 (0.8%) | 735 |

*includes one Asian

Table 9
Interdistrict Magnet Schools

| School | District | "Other" Enrollment | Black Enrollment | Latino Enrollment | White Enrollment | Total Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| East Hartford-Glastonbury Magnet | East Hartford | 15 | 61 | 26 | 181 | 283 |
| Metropolitan Learning Center | Bloomfield | 2 | 44 | 22 | 20 | 88 |
| Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet | Hamden | 17 | 90 | 18 | 192 | 317 |
| Six to Six Magnet School | Bridgeport | 4 | 78 | 73 | 150 | 305 |
| Montessori Magnet School | Hartford | 1 | 68 | 15 | 22 | 106 |
| Jepson Magnet School | New Haven | 1 | 98 | 37 | 92 | 228 |
| Cooperative High School | New Haven | 4 | 193 | 61 | 92 | 350 |
| High School in the Community | New Haven | 8 | 115 | 66 | 146 | 335 |
| Hill Regional Career High School | New Haven | 17 | 317 | 114 | 96 | 544 |
| Hyde Leadership School | New Haven | 1 | 105 | 23 | 28 | 157 |
| Sound School | New Haven | 7 | 51 | 64 | 140 | 262 |
| Multicult Magnet School | New London | 25 | 83 | 112 | 225 | 445 |
| Maloney Interdistrict Magnet | Waterbury | 15 | 54 | 195 | 279 | 543 |
| Total | | 117 | 1357 | 826 | 1663 | 3963 |

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education

Table 10
Charter School Enrollments, 1998-99

| School | % Other | % Black | % Latino | % White | Total Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ancestors Comm. Charter H.S. | 0 | 58.4 | 28.7 | 12.9 | 101 |
| Breakthrough Charter School | 6.0 | 37.6 | 52.6 | 3.8 | 133 |
| Brooklawn Academy | 0 | 45.9 | 9.8 | 44.3 | 61 |
| Charter Oak Prep | 0.9 | 52.5 | 26.7 | 19.8 | 101 |
| Common Ground H.S. | 0 | 66.7 | 27.2 | 6.2 | 81 |
| Coventry Science Center | 2.8 | 0 | 0 | 97.2 | 36 |
| Explorations | 1.6 | 3.2 | 0 | 95.2 | 63 |
| Highville Mustard Seed Charter School | 0.6 | 74.3 | 11.2 | 13.8 | 152 |
| Integrated Day Charter School | 4.5 | 14.9 | 9.0 | 71.5 | 221 |
| Interdistrict Sch for Arts and Communications | 10.0 | 34.4 | 24.4 | 31.1 | 90 |
| Jumoke Academy | 0 | 98.0 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 150 |
| Odyssey Community School | 4.0 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 77.0 | 74 |
| Side By Side Comm. Sch. | 0 | 25.7 | 26.9 | 47.5 | 160 |
| Sport Sciences Academy | 0.5 | 52.5 | 44.6 | 2.5 | 204 |
| The Bridge Academy | 0 | 49.4 | 42.9 | 7.6 | 170 |
| Village Academy | 0 | 93.6 | 6.4 | 0 | 78 |

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education

Table 11
New Haven Interdistrict Magnet Schools
Percent of Urban and Suburban Students Who are Minorities
1999-2000 Academic Year

| School | City total | City student % minority | Suburban total | Suburban % minority |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hill Reg. Career HS | 543 | 88% | 166 | 77% |
| Coop. Arts and Humanities | 266 | 84% | 196 | 47% |
| HS in the Community | 254 | 65% | 92 | 34% |
| Hyde Leadership HS | 139 | 94% | 51 | 75% |
| Jepson ES | 196 | 72% | 66 | 41% |
| Betsy Ross Arts MS | 150 | 89% | 32 | 81% |
| Total | 1548 | 82% | 513 | 58% |

SOURCE: New Haven Public Schools, Magnet School Office